

**MINUTES OF MEETING  
CONWAY CONSERVATION COMMISSION  
January 11, 2012**

The Jan. meeting of the Conway Conservation Commission convened at 6:30 p.m. at the Whitaker Homesite in North Conway, NH. Members present were: Paul Pinkham, Carol Lyman, Larry Huemmler, Rob Adair, and Linda Kearney. Dan Lucy joined the meeting at 6:45 p.m. Also present were Land Protection Specialist Linda Comeau, of Upper Saco Valley Land Trust, and Larry Garland.

**1. Approval of Minutes 1/9/11 Motion was made by Ms. Kearney, seconded by Mr. Huemmler and carried, that the Minutes of the Nov. 9<sup>th</sup> meeting be approved as circulated.**

**2. Public Comment:** None.

**3. Reports:**

**a. Don Johnson-** Mr. Johnson could not be present for a report; however, it was noted that he had had a successful timber harvest at Pudding Pond. Mr. Pinkham made note that we did exceed the budget by \$1,000 with the collapse of the bridge when the Brontosaurus machine was brought across on Red Tail Trail. Mr. Pinkham also noted that in checking the RSAs, timber harvest revenue comes to the Conservation Commission and not necessarily to the land acquisition fund.

**Upper Saco Valley Land Trust Presentation:** Linda Comeau stated she is excited to learn that the CCC is interested in taking this step and is interested in procuring conservation easements on town-owned lands. She provided information explaining the process through which this can be accomplished, beginning with mutual agreement between the parties of an interest in placing a property under conservation easement, and setting out the protection and ownership goals and conservation values it is important to protect. She stated USVLT will draft the easement [she noted, however, they are somewhat short staffed at present, but are in the process of hiring their first Executive Director]. They will provide an Easement Baseline Documentation Report.

Ms. Comeau questioned whether the CCC would be able to provide a stewardship fund contribution to ensure their ability to meet their responsibilities under the conservation easement in perpetuity, and monitor the property annually to ensure compliance with the terms of the easement. The amount of the contribution is based on the size of the property and the terms and conditions of the conservation easement, and is a one-time fee.

Ms. Kearney questioned allowing hunting on easement land. Ms. Comeau stated that is the property owner's choice. Mr. Garland said it could be an allowed use if you so choose. Ms. Comeau said anything that is not specifically prohibited could be allowed. Mr. Pinkham pointed out we have hunting on most of these properties.

Ms. Comeau stated a copy of the Forest Management Plan prepared by Don Johnson would be helpful to have and would help to identify more of the conservation values. She questioned also whether there are surveys available for the properties. Mr. Pinkham stated, historically, they are well marked, with some exceptions. Ms. Comeau noted Pudding Pond property is well marked and the State has flagged a certain section as well. Mr. Pinkham stated the Town Manager has the data on this. Mr. Pinkham advised the next step is to sit down with Earl Sires.

Ms. Comeau questioned whether the CCC is able to contribute to the stewardship fund. Mr. Pinkham stated yes, the cost of acquiring an easement can include funding. Mr. Garland questioned whether any of this would have to go before the town for a vote. Mr. Adair said that would have to be discussed with the Selectmen; he is not sure whether it would require a vote of the town - Mr. Sires was to have contacted legal counsel to ascertain that. It was felt if it requires a vote of the town the timing will be an issue. Mr. Pinkham stated both parties are committed, but there is no reason to be hasty. Mr. Adair has discussed with Mr. Sires the need to have protection over the properties – there was some question whether the town needed easements to protect the properties we call conservation lands. Mr. Adair pointed out that the CCC cannot hold easements – it has to be a third party.

Ms. Kearney questioned what the legal defense fund is for and was told it is in there in case someone were to violate the easement.

**Conclusion:** Mr. Pinkham stated both parties continue to be enthusiastic about proceeding with conservation easements; Don Johnson needs to provide management plans; Earl Sires needs to initiate the process by contacting USVLT, which he will discuss with him.

**b. Wink Lees – TNC – Not present.**

**c. Treasurer’s Report -** Ms. Lyman provided the end of year report. Mr. Pinkham made note that we had not, in fact, exceeded the budget; however, there are still bills due from the Forester. Ms. Lyman provided balances in accounts. The November accounting for the CCC showed it to be under budget; however, recent, not-yet-posted, billing from FLI should bring the account to balance.

Mr. Pinkham noted on two occasions we have gone to the Selectmen for their agreement on how we acquire land and manage our dollars, and have received approval - they have agreed that acquiring conservation easements was O.K. to do, and better than purchasing land outright.

**d. Selectmen’s Report – None – Mr. Weathers could not be present.**

**e. Member Roundtable –** Mr. Pinkham noted the budget remains as it was when we submitted it.

Mr. Adair will draft the annual report of the Conservation Commission for the Town Report.

Mr. Huemmler reported on the meeting of the Saco River Committee which was held recently at the site on River Road, including discussion with Pete Gagnon. He noted the current thinking is to expand the parking lot on the northeast side to make a boat ramp or a dock and a turn-around. It was Mr. Adair's opinion that it would be a difficult place to put a canoe or kayak in the water. Mr. Huemmler stated another meeting is being scheduled and this will be discussed further.

It was pointed out that the Conservation Commission is still in need of one member.

Ms. Kearney noted someone had wanted to give us some land on Conway Lake off Stritch Road and questioned what has happened with that. Mr. Pinkham said he does not know of any action or whether we have been approached further.

**Adjourn: Motion was made by Ms. Kearney, seconded by Ms. Lyman and carried, that the meeting be adjourned at 7:00 p.m.**

Respectfully Submitted,

Gail T. Currier, Recording Secretary